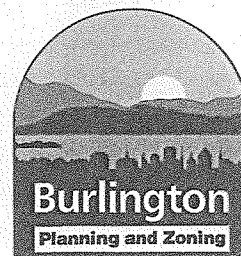


Department of Planning and Zoning

149 Church Street
Burlington, VT 05401
Telephone: (802) 865-7188
(802) 865-7195 (FAX)
(802) 865-7142 (TTY)

David White, AICP, Director
Ken Lerner, Assistant Director
Sandrine Thibault, AICP, Comprehensive Planner
Jay Appleton, GIS Manager
Scott Gustin, AICP, Senior Planner
Mary O'Neil, AICP, Senior Planner
Nic Anderson, Zoning Clerk
Elsie Tillotson, Department Secretary



TO: Design Advisory Board
FROM: Scott Gustin
DATE: November 26, 2013
RE: 14-0466PD, 140 Grove Street

Zone: RL Ward: 1
Owner/Representative: Ireland Brothers Corp. / Patrick O'Brien Development, LLC

Request: Preliminary plat review for Planned Unit Development to demolish existing concrete plant and associated commercial buildings, construct 12 new residential buildings with 247 residential units with associated road, parking, and site improvements.

OVERVIEW:

The applicant is seeking preliminary plat approval for a 247-unit residential development, including 12 multi-family buildings and associated site improvements. Demolition of existing commercial buildings is also proposed. The applicant underwent sketch plan review with the DAB on May 28, 2013 and an initial preliminary plat review of November 15, 2013. The preliminary plat review was continued to allow the applicant time to make changes to the proposal. Requested changes related to strengthening the interior streetscape, reducing parking, incorporating additional smaller buildings, depicting installation details for the proposed siding, and improving the front entries of the smaller multi-unit buildings.

Revised plans have been submitted and reflect minimal changes. Some of the surface angled parking has been replaced by parallel parking along some of the interior streets, and the entrances into the smaller multi-unit buildings have been made more prominent (however, there's no indication as to whether they are now functional or remain fake). There is also now a row of "future parking spaces" in the center parking lot.

The project is proposed as a major planned unit development (PUD). The PUD process affords some degree of flexibility from a rigid application of the dimensional standards and unit types typically allowed in a residential zone in order to address the overall intent described by Article 11 of the CDO. Sec. 11.1.11 is intended to preserve important features and resources, to encourage a variety of housing types, to achieve a high level of design, and to provide for more efficient provision of infrastructure (which comes by way of smaller lots and buildings closer together rather than all spread out on large lots).

This project is located in the Residential Low Density zone. The purpose statement as articulated in the CDO is as follows.

Sec. 4.4.5 Residential Districts (*emphasis added*)

(a) Purpose:

The Residential Districts are intended to control development in residential districts in order to create a safe, livable, and pedestrian friendly environment. They are also intended to create an inviting streetscape for residents and visitors. Development that places emphasis on architectural details and form is encouraged, where primary buildings and entrances are oriented to the sidewalk, and historic development patterns are reinforced. Parking shall be placed either behind, within, or to the side of structures, as is consistent with the district and/or the neighborhood. Building facades designed for parking shall be secondary to the residential aspect of a structure.

The 5 Residential districts as illustrated in Map 4.4.5-1 are further described as follows:

1. The **Residential Low Density (RL)** district is intended primarily for low-density residential development in the form of single detached dwellings and duplexes. This district is typically characterized by a compact and cohesive residential development pattern reflective of the respective neighborhoods' development history.

With its modest revisions, headway is being made towards improvement; however, the most recent iteration remain well off the mark for the express intent of the city's Residential Low Density zone and the design review standards of Article 6. The proposal continues to consist entirely of exceptions to the rule and in no way embraces the purpose of the RL district. There are no single family homes or duplexes to form the basis of a cohesive residential neighborhood. As stated throughout sketch plan review and again at preliminary plat, large multi-family buildings may be included in the proposed PUD but they cannot be the entirety of it.

ARTICLE 6: DEVELOPMENT REVIEW STANDARDS

Part 1, Land Division Design Standards

Sec. 6.1.2, Review Standards

Two large parcels and part of a third will be merged together. The proposed changes are shown on some, but not all, of the project plans. Plans must depict consistent property boundaries throughout. While a survey is not required at preliminary plat, the preliminary plans must nonetheless show exact boundary lines. A boundary survey by a VT licensed land surveyor must be provided prior to final plat review.

Part 2, Site Plan Design Standards

Sec. 6.2.2, Review Standards

(a) Protection of important natural features

Two natural resource overlays affect the property:

- 1) Riparian and Littoral Conservation Zone
- 2) Wetlands Conservation Zone

The proposed development appears to be out of the riparian and littoral conservation zone along the Winooski River but will impact some of it along Centennial Brook. The project plans do not include these overlays and they must be provided in order that the extent of impacts can be clearly discerned. An impact analysis per Sec. 5.4.5 (c) must be provided prior to final plat approval. Much of the work along Centennial Brook will actually result in an improvement by removing a driveway and culvert and restoring the brook to an open channel.

The wetlands are depicted on the project plans. Development is not within the wetlands, but there is some encroachment into the 100' wetland buffer by a new surface parking lot at the southeastern

end of the site. There is ample room to reconfigure this parking lot. Alternatively, a wetland impact analysis per Sec. 4.5.4 (d) will be required prior to final plat approval.

Lastly, wooded areas around the periphery of the construction site will remain intact.

(b) Topographical alterations

Substantial grading and filling is proposed; however, it will be limited to existing disturbed areas. The overall topography of the site will remain generally as it exists.

(c) Protection of important public views

There are no important public views from or through the property.

(d) Protection of important cultural resources

The property is not included in the city's map of archeologically sensitive areas (in the Open Space Protection Plan); however, its location along the Winooski River increases the likelihood that prehistoric artifacts may be present. As part of due diligence, the applicant is advised to contact the Vermont Division for Historic Preservation to inquire as to studies of the area that may indicate heightened archaeological significance. If, during construction, artifacts are unearthed, it is the applicant's responsibility to stop earthwork and to contact the Division for further guidance.

(e) Supporting the use of alternative energy

No apparent alternative energy is incorporated into the project design. Given the significant roof area, clear southern exposure, and the opportunity for economy of scale, the applicant is strongly encouraged to include rooftop solar into the project design.

(f) Brownfield sites

The property is included on the Vermont DEC Hazardous Site List. The listing indicates that diesel and heating oil contamination were found but also notes that Site Management Activities were completed in 1999.

(g) Provide for nature's events

A stormwater management system is proposed. The system includes a number of catch basins and pipes used to collect stormwater runoff and direct it into an onsite "wet" pond for attenuation. Stormwater will ultimately discharge into the Winooski River. Existing discharge points into Centennial Brook will be eliminated. The stormwater system takes advantage of the sandy soils and makes use of several infiltration locations to reduce stormwater volumes. Final details for the proposed stormwater management system will be required prior to final plat approval.

A comprehensive erosion prevention and sediment control plan has been provided. As with the stormwater management, final details will be required prior to final plat approval.

Several areas for snow storage are interspersed throughout the site.

(h) Building location and orientation

The proposed development is large enough that it will essentially result in the establishment of a new neighborhood. The visible public streetscape along Grove Street is an important component; however, equally important is the establishment of a well-defined built environment, functional open spaces, and interconnectivity between these components within this new neighborhood.

The proposed buildings along Grove Street are placed fairly close to the road. Verbal confirmation of compliance with the required front yard setback has been provided; however, it remains excluded from the project plans. The plans must include a notation of how the front yard setback was calculated. Further into the development, improvement has been made by replacing much of the angled parking with parallel parking. Two of the larger apartment buildings to the southeast continued to face parking areas. This site is large enough that all of the parking (sans "on-street" parallel parking) can be reasonably placed behind the buildings. Front entries are obvious, and insofar as there are interior "roads," the entries face them. Generally, the buildings are parallel to the interior roads; however, the community center building is not. This building is set at about 45 degrees and should be rotated to 90 degrees to reinforce the corner.

As recommended in sketch plan review, the very large apartment buildings have been pushed further back into the development; however, opportunity remains to introduce more, smaller buildings into the project design to better reflect the intent and purpose of the Residential Low Density zone. Per Sec. 4.4.5 (a), the RL zone is "...intended primarily for low density development in the form of single detached dwellings and duplexes. This district is characterized by a compact and cohesive residential development pattern reflective of the respective neighborhood's development history." The number, type, and layout of proposed buildings remains unchanged.

(i) Vehicular access

One existing curb cut will be removed to allow for restoration of the Centennial Brook channel. Doing so will leave one curb cut to serve the development. Adequacy of access has been conceptually approved by the Fire Marshal, and final approval will be required prior to final plat approval. Sight lines and turning radii will be subject to review and approval by the Department of Public Works.

(j) Pedestrian access

All proposed buildings have front walkways that connect to the walkway network throughout the development. This interior walkway network connects to the public sidewalk along Grove Street. The two buildings along Grove Street now have front walkway connecting directly to the sidewalk. This configuration implies that their front entries are actually functional; however, confirmation is needed. This public sidewalk will be extended into South Burlington as part of this development. It is noted on the plans that the proposed city sidewalk does not extend across the access driveway, but appears only painted stripes across the asphalt. This is not acceptable, and the city sidewalk must be continuous across the driveway.

Pedestrian routes from parking areas are depicted on the project plans.

(k) Accessibility for the handicapped

Handicap parking spaces are depicted on the site plans. The buildings will require handicap accessible features per the ADA as administered through the city's building code.

(l) Parking and circulation

Parking will be provided underneath the 6 largest buildings, along the interior streets, and in surface parking lots. This criterion requires that parking be placed at the side or rear of the property to the extent possible and screened from view from surrounding properties and adjacent

public streets. Improvement has been made by replacing much of the angled parking with parallel parking. Significant angled parking remains, including some in front of the residences. The parking must be located behind the buildings. Alternatively, multi-level parking under the buildings would be acceptable. There is opportunity here to create interior streetscapes like those so common in other Burlington neighborhoods. Emphasis needs to be placed on creating a well-defined, inviting streetscape. The proposed development has not achieved this standard.

This criterion also requires shading of surface parking areas. A 30% shading objective is articulated. The parking areas include a number of trees; however, no shading details are yet provided and must be.

(m) Landscaping and fences

A comprehensive landscaping plan has been provided and includes 146 new trees, 507 shrubs, and 780 perennials. The trees basically line all of the parking and circulation drives. There is opportunity to create more of a street tree layout with repositioned parking as noted in criterion (l) above. The revised site plan does not depict street trees (or any other landscaping). Thirteen of the new trees are proposed along Grove Street and are subject to review and approval by the City Arborist. Generally, the proposed landscaping is used to provide boundaries between interior spaces and to soften transitions between buildings and pavement. Split rail fencing will be installed to follow the eastern "ridgeline" along the clearing boundaries of the site. It too will provide a boundary between the developed and wooded portions of the property.

(n) Public plazas and open space

Substantial open space will be available for use by residents of the development. Two large center greens are proposed and may be used for active or passive recreation. The clubhouse and community pool are located in the northern green. A pavilion is depicted in the southern green. Access to trails will be provided and will afford access into the wooded portions of the property. No children's play areas or other recreational facilities (such as basketball courts) are evident and should be incorporated into the design. Several small community garden sites may also be appropriate. The applicant is encouraged to consider the creation of multiple pocket parks, patios, and/or pavilion areas defined with hardscaping (i.e. pavers, walls, benches, etc.) and landscaping.

(o) Outdoor lighting

New outdoor lighting will consist of pole-mounted fixtures for parking and circulation areas, and wall-mounted fixtures for building entries. The locations are depicted on project plans, and the proposed lights are acceptable cut-off fixtures. A photometric plan has not yet been provided and must be to demonstrate compliance with the illumination standards of Sec. 5.5.2.

(p) Integrate infrastructure into the design

Substantial new infrastructure will be required to support the proposed development. A utility plan and details sheet have been provided. All utility lines must be buried. Several dumpster pad locations are evident on the site plan; however, no details are provided. The dumpsters must be enclosed for screening purposes. No mail box locations are evident either. If "gang boxes" are proposed, they must be designed to relate to the surrounding buildings. They cannot be unadorned grey metal boxes on poles. No ground-mounted mechanical equipment (such as HVAC or electrical "hot boxes") details have been provided and must be.

Part 3, Architectural Design Standards

Sec. 6.3.2, Review Standards

(a) Relate development to its environment

1. Massing, Height, and Scale

Three residential building types are proposed for the 6-unit, 9-unit and 30+ unit buildings. A clubhouse building and pavilions are also proposed. No elevation drawings of the pavilion structures have been provided and must be.

This project is a planned unit development, and therefore, may include multi-family buildings. However, as explicitly stated in this criterion, the most important considerations when evaluating the compatibility of in-fill development in the RL zone are the height and massing of existing buildings in the vicinity. The residences along Grove Street to either side of this proposed development consist of single family and multi-family homes, all of moderate size. The proposed buildings in this new development are all substantially larger than neighboring homes. This criterion allows for dissimilar development but calls for a sensitive transition. The proposed development attempts to provide this transition by placing the smaller buildings along Grove Street and placing the very large buildings further into the site. The problem is that the massing, height, and scale of even the smallest 6-unit buildings are much greater than those of the neighboring residences. A much more context sensitive transition could be provided by locating smaller scale 2- and 3- family homes along Grove Street with a gradual transition in unit type and intensity further into the development. Generally, additional smaller buildings and fewer large buildings would be appropriate in this Residential Low Density zone. This proposal continues to consist of large and larger buildings and is unacceptable.

As for the building elevations, the 6-unit and 9-unit buildings successfully read as large homes. They effectively utilize fenestration, porches, dormers, and other architectural details to provide intricacy to these fairly large buildings. There is some variation amongst their design. The large 30+ unit buildings incorporate a variety of porches, balconies, varying materials, and architectural details to avoid any large expanses of undifferentiated building mass. The buildings also appear more vertical than horizontal as required by this criterion. All six of these buildings, however, are identical. Although not explicitly required by this criterion, some differentiation amongst these buildings should be incorporated into the project design.

The clubhouse building is a relatively low-slung gable-roofed structure with a fairly innocuous design. It is not a residence and should not read as such; however, as proposed, the building clearly reads more horizontal than vertical. The wide roof mass and the relatively short exterior walls contribute to this perception. More vertical emphasis should be placed on the building design as required by this criterion.

2. Roofs and Rooflines

The 6- and 9-unit building types incorporate hip roof designs with roof dormers to enable living space. The variety of roof planes has been simplified as recommended. The proposed roof type is typical of residential development. The larger buildings contain gable roofs. Differing planes and gables contribute to breaking up the massing of these very large apartment buildings. As noted above, the clubhouse building includes a gable roof.

3. Building Openings

Proposed fenestration in the 6- and 9-unit building types is typical for residential development and appears to consist primarily of double hung windows with grilles and shutters applied in a

consistent pattern. There is more variation in the larger apartment buildings. That variation helps to define individual components within the very large structures. The clubhouse includes fenestration unique within the development. This uniqueness appropriately helps to differentiate it from the residential buildings.

(b) Protection of important architectural resources

Buildings within the existing concrete plant are not historically significant. Their demolition will not adversely impact any important architectural resources.

(c) Protection of important public views

See 6.2.2 (c) above.

(d) Provide an active and inviting street edge

The proposed development is large enough to amount to the creation of a new residential neighborhood; however, what is proposed does not reflect any existing neighborhood pattern within Burlington. An interior street network lined with close-set buildings should be created. Some improvement has been made by reducing the abundance of angled parking, but the pattern of development within the proposal remains a disperse collection large buildings. The steps taken relative to parking arrangement create more of an interior street network than the prior layout of surface parking areas connected by circulation isles. Additional steps, such as introducing more smaller buildings to fill in the gaps, are needed to create an authentic street edge within a cohesive neighborhood.

(e) Quality of materials

Exterior building materials consist largely of varying types of vinyl siding. Some brick veneer will be utilized on the largest apartment buildings and stone veneer along the foundation of the clubhouse. Composite trim will be installed along with asphalt shingle roofing. Railings will be metal, and clad windows will be installed. This criterion states that "all development shall maximize the use of highly durable building materials that extend the life cycle of the building, and reduce maintenance, waste, and environmental impacts." Vinyl siding is not especially durable, and has a short lifecycle when compared to other materials; however, the Design Advisory Board felt that vinyl may be acceptable depending on installation details. No such details have been provided.

(f) Reduce energy utilization

There is no information relative to energy efficiency of the proposed buildings. At a minimum, the buildings must comply with the city's current energy efficiency requirements.

(g) Make advertising features complimentary to the site

No advertising features are included in the proposal. Signs are subject to subject zoning permit review.

(h) Integrate infrastructure into the building design

No building mounted mechanical equipment or meters are noted on the elevation plans. Any such items must be clearly depicted and screened on the project plans. Any rooftop equipment that results in exceeding the applicable height limits must be incorporated into an architectural feature as part of the overall project design. They may not simply be placed atop the roofs. Mail boxes for these multi-family homes need consideration. The plans do not address how these will be

handled. Any gang mailboxes would need to be boxed in with materials that match the proposed buildings.

(i) Make spaces safe and secure

Building entries will be illuminated, and the buildings should have intercom systems to maximize personal safety of the tenants. As noted previously, the adequacy of single site access must be confirmed by the Fire Marshal.

RECOMMENDED MOTION:

This project has undergone several sketch plan reviews and an initial preliminary plat review. It continues to be a disperse collection of large and larger multi-unit buildings. While some modest improvements have been made, it remains fundamentally incompatible with the express intent of the Residential Low Density zoning district and the associated design review standards of Article 6. Denial is recommended.